THE CACTUS TIMES

Mexicon/Tynecon II daily newsletter.

ISSUE 1 Sat. May 26th 1984

Welcome to Tynecon 2/ Mexicon. This newsletter is intended to be a daily occurrence, reporting a mixture of what was interesting yesterday and special announcements about the day ahead. It is intended that the newsletter be open to whoever wants to make use of it. If you have anything interesting to say, please see Linda Pickersgill or Mike Hamilton, both to be found in the region of the fanzine room.

TALE OF TWO GENRES: A Guest Editorial Opinion about today's film, ALPHAVILLE (5.00 p.m.)

Science fiction and detective fiction are two genres which have often been linked together. S.F. writers, notably, Isaac Asimov, Fredric Brown, Wilson Tucker and Jack Vance are equally respected for their detective fiction while crime and thriller writers such as Lawrence Sanders, and Ed McBain have made the occasional foray into the world of SF. Often crime novels, and in particular that branch known as the "police proceedural", depend on scientific explanation to resolve an investigation.

In SF Asimov has successfully combined both genres with his Lije Bailey "robot" stories, The Naked Sun and The Caves of Steel and also in his short story collection Asomov's Mysteries. On film Bladerunner is a recent example of how both genres can complement each other.

Today you can see an early example of such a combination in Jean-Luc Goddard's SF classic Alphaville. This film allowed Godard to indulge himself in his love for both genresb by introducing Peter Cheynet's famous character Lemmy Caution into an SF setting. Caution is a totally amoral government undercover agent who solves crimes in a unique way. He creates utter chaos through lies and violence and then picks up the pieces. Do yourself a favour, if you enjoy either genre see this film.

(For further details see John Jarrold's excellent comments in the programme book.)

Dave Cockfield

GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS??

GET STUFFED-- Meeting for soft toys and their friends in the continuation room at 6.00 p.m. Saturday.

TWP-- The Womens Periodical will have a meeting in the continuation room on Sunday at 11.00 a.m.

THE HEAD-- Matt Sillars reports:- The RNIB Head Appeal is a fund to raise money in order to finance talking SF books for the blind. We'd like to raise at least £20 at Tynecon 2, and as of Friday night the fund stands at £10.40. There will be flyers and collecting tins placed around the con hotel. Any donations will be greatly appreciate

Survivors of Ultra-Quiz Round Three

Steve Lawson	Roy Kettle
Justin Ackroyd	Dave Bell
Tom Taylor	Nick Lowe
Julian Headlong	M. R. Moir
Dave Ellis	Rog Peyton
Jim Barker	Alex Stewart
Oscar Dalgleish	Mike Bordewell
Richard Cowper	Lisa Tuttle

Ultra-Quiz Rounds One and Two -- Answers

Beyond Fantasy Fiction magazine only lasted for ten issues - True
T. D. Bethlem is better known as Ken Bulmer - False
Prof. Lindenbrock, hero of Verne's 'Journey to the Centre of the Earth' lived in Salzburg - False
Fredric Brown's short story collection 'Nightmares and Geezenstacks' contains 47 stories - True
A. E. van Vogt's collection 'The Twisted Men' was published as an Ace Double in 1964. The book it was paired with was 'The Arsenal of Miracles' by Gardner F. Fox - False. 'One of our asteroids is missing' by Calvin M. Knox
Murray Leinster's 'Exploration Team' won the Hugo in 1955 False. 1956
Fritz Lieber is 74 years old. True
The screenplay for the film "The Illustrated Man" was written by Howard B Koch. False Howard B Kreitsek
Isaac Asimov became an American citizen in 1926. False. 1928
Warren F. Howard is better known as Fredrick Pohl. True
Up to this month, the Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction has published 396 editions True
Robert Heinlein's first story was published in 1937. False 1939
The U.K. magazine Science Fantasy changed it's title to Impulse in March 1966. The last number called Science Fantasy was no.82. False 84
The Strange World of Planet X was directed by Gilbert Bunn False Gilbert Gunn
Issue No. 1 of "Miracle Science Fiction" magazine (1931) was illustrated by Elliott Dold? True
Jack Williamson's story "The Second Shell" was published in Air Wonder Stories in November 1929? True
Wade Kaempfert was a house pseudonym of the magazine Science Fiction Plus? False -- Rocket Stories
Allen Kim Lang's first published story was "The Machine of Klamuugra"? True
Edmund Boisgilbert was a pseudomym of Ignatius Donnelly? True
The first four "Dune" novels, plus appendices total 1796 pages? False -- 1694
The Hugo for best novel has been awarded 31 times to date? False - 29
The December 1975 edition of Analog featured "The Bitter Bread" by Poul Anderson True
John W. Cambell was appointed editor of ASF commencing with the November 1937 issue? False -- Sept. 1937

DIVINE COMEDY

Last night's midnight movie was the 1972 John Waters film, Pink Flamingos, starring Divine as the Filthiest person in the world. After the film, we asked a few people in the bar what they thought of it and here are some of the more decipherable answers --

Pam Wells:- It was OK until the part with the chickens...

Jim B:- Urrghh...

Paul V:- Execrable...

Kevin R. Dramatic with a very large woman
(Paul V. Uh, Kev, that was a man actually.
Kev. Huh ?
Paul Yeah, Divine is a man
Kev. Ah. I see. Uh, er um...)

Robert:- Sick
Glen W.:- A bit over the top but I didn't mind Divine
D. Terrible!! Wonderful, actually. It didn't have any budget at all...
Neil H. Boring...
Disgusting -- makes a change from Star Wars -- enjoyable in a funny sick way
? (again) Excellent - good for a laugh
Kev. W. Teriffic. I loved it. It's deliberately a very amateur film
Greg P. Depressing - so many people thought it was awful for all the wrong reasons
Linda P. The underground comix of the cinema
Martin H. Gross encounters of a very different kind
Peter How much did they pay those people to do that??

There were several more opinions collected last night but due to the basic technical ignorance of ye reporters, they were erased from the dictaphone tape. However, if memory serves me half well, many people walked out at some point but still 2/3 of them thought it amusing...

THE MEXICON GUIDE TO UNUSUAL LATIN LIQUEURS - Brian Ameringen

MESCAL -- Supposedly distilled from the pulped remains of the Mescal Cactus (from which Mescalin is derived), this spiritous drink has a characteristic vegetable weedy flavour and a numbing effect that starts at the fingers and works inwards! Each genuine bottle contains the Agave worm, which according to popular mythology when eaten reveals to its consumer the universe as it REALLY is!

INCA PISCO -- This drink was invented by the Spanish Conquistadores, once they'd run out of rum, distilled from the cooked, pulped remains of one of the other local cacti. Made in continuous pot stills it is a clear, dry brandy-type spirit which has a characteristic odour of beeswax. This is due to the beeswax lined amphorae in which it was traditionally transported to the coast prior to export. Smooth, and decidedly falling over material.

1984: MEXICON-STYLE. A report from the censorship debate.

Memories of Silicon 2 (1977) and the incident involving some people from Norwich were aroused during the 'Sitting Ducks/ censorship item' on Friday night, when a man suddenly stood up and announced that he was leaving. "This has nothing to do with written SF. I've spent the last hour listening to a lot of chat about organising other 'conferences', and now we're on to censorship of FILMS!!

Greg Pickersgill asked why he was so upset about it, and why he couldn't see the relevance of the subject to sf, adding that the novels of Philip K. Dick were probably next on the hit list -- a view endorsed by Peter Nicholls. Questioned later, Pickersgill gave an expressive shrug. The anonymous protestor wouldn't be drawn, and left.

CACTUS TIMES would be fascinated to hear his side of the story.

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WHAT SOME PEOPLE SAY.

"I can't stand it any more.....I've got to bum some socks."

Tony Berry.

TYNECON 74.

"Ten years ago!" Ian Maule reports "My Gawd the carpet hasn't changed." For a small consideration he will point out one or two stains of historic faanish importance. See Mr Maule in the bar.

Thanks to Maureen Porter and Sue Thomason for Typing and consultation.

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ISSUE 2 Sun. May 27th 1984

CRUISING DOWN THE RIVER ON A SUNDAY AFTERNOON: A Guest Editorial Opinion about today's film, CELINE AND JULIE GO BOATING (1.00pm.)

Today at 1.00 pm you have the chance to see, what is perhaps, the most interesting film at this convention, "Celine and Julie go boating". Although few people have seen it, myself included, everything I have read and heard suggests that it is a stimulating exercise about the nature of reality.

Some critics have dismissed it as being boring, arty, pretentious, overlong (3 hours +) and having lesbian overtones, yet it is equally accepted that the film is a bold experiment in film making. In the programme book John Jarrold has referred to it as a "brilliant surreal French" (we don' need no steenkin' long-life milk) "film". To find out if this is true we will have to see it for ourselves.

Fen may be interested to know that two women involved in later scenes in the film are the actress, "Bulle Ogier", and the director, "Barbet Schroeder" who were responsible for that earlier classic of speculative cinema "La Vallee" (The Valley-Obscured by Clouds) which had an excellent soundtrack by the Pink Floyd.

Dave Cockfield

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ULTRA QUIZ.

Round 4 was the traditional 'Neil Hepple' "make the contestants do silly things with ping-pong balls and darts, while crawling around on the floor" game. Good time was had by all, especially the audience. Dispite some creative cheating Jim Barker and Leroy Kettle both failed to win through into the next round. Rog Peyton went very red, but even with that exertion he too failed to qualify. This round cut the 16 down to 8 (well, 9 actually, but we'll draw a veil over that cock-up.)

Round 5 was a SF quiz called 'THE ROLLER COASTER', perhaps the only Gannet game not pirated from a radio or television show. Fiendish Kevin Williams asked some incredible questions. Question of the evening was asked of Steve Lawson, "Who wrote 'Rocket man'", for once even the audience didn't seem to know the answer. The answer was of course....Elton John!

Final scores. Julian Headlong 17, Justin Ackroyd 17, Tom Taylor 7, Dave Bell 6. Steve Lawson, Dave Ellis, Paul Dormer and Duncan Booth failed to qualify.

Round six is at 5.30. Quiz master Neil Thompson requests that the four conntestants meet him in the fanzine room at 5.10 pm.

The Answers to Ultra-quiz round three.

1. Name three works in which nearly all of the characters are in fact the same person? ---Answer. By his bootstraps (Heinlein), All you Zombies (Heinlein), The man who folded himself (Gerrold.)
2. Where are the following terrestrial or extra-terrestrial places? HELIUM (Barsoom) MIDWICH (England) PERELANDRA (Venus)
3. What do Zenya, Jondell, Eloise and Mayenne have in common? All are title characters of E.C.Tubb's 'Dumarest of Terra' series.
4. The following are memorable lines from famous SF films. Which? "All the universe or nothingness, which shall it be Passworthy?" (Things To Come)
   "Easy enough to talk of soul, spirit and essential worth, but not when you're three feet tall" (The Incredible Shrinking Man)
   "Star sapphires take a week to chrystallise. Will diamonds or emaralds do " (Forbidden Planet)
5. Which recent SF novel begins:"Spring came to the University of Minnetonka in the form of a midnight blizzaed"? (Roderick by John Sladek)
6. In what year was Asimov's most famous short story, "Nightfall" published? (1941)
7. Who are Laura, Dierdre, Fiona and Llewella (Sister's of Zelazny's "Nine Princes of Amber")
8. What prolific author has written at least one SF or Fantasy novel beginning with every letter of the alphabet (Andre Norton)
9. The following three authors are not known primarily as SF writers. Name one work of each that <u>is</u> SF. Robert Graves ("Watch the North Wind Rise" Sinclair Lewis ("It Happened Here") Daphne du Maurier ("Rule Brittania" or I suppose "The Birds")
10. Here is a set of six authors. Supply a work by the first author, the last word of which is the first word of a work by the second. Opening "the's" have been provided where relevant:
    A.E.Van Vogt: The (Mind Cage), F.M.Busby:(Cage a Man), Phillip K. Dick: The (Man in the High Castle), L.Sprague de Camp:(Castle of Iron), Norman Spinrad:The (Iron Dream), James White:The(Dream Millenium).
11. In the three major SF series by a certain writer, the principle ~~female~~ names all begin with the letter 'D'. Name the author, series and ladies. (Edgar Rice Burroughs; Dejah Thoris in the Mars series, Duare in the Venus series, Diane the Beautiful in the Pellucidar series)
12. Name the Sf films in which the following charac ers appear: Exeter of Metaluna (This Island Earth) Colnel Breen (Quatermass and the Pit), Wolf von Frankenstein (Son of Frankenstein).

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<u>HEAD NEWS</u>: Matt Sillers reports that the Head appeal to raise money for talking for the blind has earned over £21.00 from members of the con. Thanks to all who contributed.

STEVE GREEN LOGIC: War is peace, Truth is Lies and Seacon was Fun (<u>You</u> ask him what it means...)

RAFFLE RAFFLE RAFFLE.....Rog Peyton and Beverley Friend have donated four first edition books (£35.00 worth) to be raffled at the con. Tickets are 20p each and available from that blond who hangs out in the fanzine room blowing bubbles (and don't any of you wise guys ask who bubbles is). For all you hard hombres there's a bottle of Tequila also to be raffled (see the same blond) with the prize to be given away tonight. Viva la Mexicon.

<u>FOOD SUGGESTIONS</u>: First of all, I hope most of you are aware that there very good and cheap sanwiches (40p) and hot meals (£1.50) available in the Kelly Bar, just around the bar behind the registration desk. ALSO.....remember to eat your evening meal <u>EARLY</u> tonight if you want to catch the P.K.Dick play at 8:00.

Censorship Straw poll.

Not a very good response. In general people were aware of the wide reaching effects of the new Video Bill. Even those who were not, many said they were not surprised. One reply said that Computer games are also covered by this bill. Another reply: "Yes (nothing the Home office does will surprise me, since I work for them.)"Those questions were not intended to discover where people stood on this issue, however several people voiced concern over the new bill, and one person agreed with it.

Very few people were aware that several Graham Greene titles are in danger of being banned. Almost everyone was aware of the seizure of books which have been available for years. One person replied: "Yes - and my disapproval is quite categorical in one respect: there MUST be a published, updated, openly available list, and NO other works should be able to be confiscated. Make government do its work first!" Another person: "A Questionnaire is only the first stage of a campaign. Fanzine articles could be the next. Tell us more!"

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BOOGIE REVIEW.

The disco last night seemed to be a raving success, judging from the number of wiped out, prone bodies left littering the floor after the music finally stopped at about 3.00 am. Though scheduled to end at 2.00 the crazed mass of heaving bodies demanded that the music continue in order to satisfy their savage ritulistic fannish need to expend as much energy as possible. "Groovy" said Avedon Carol, as she watched the writhing thong, "In America we just give back rubs to relieve this sort of tension- I think you British have the right idea". That whirling Dervish of British Fandom, John Jarrold, was known to dance every single dance except for the Osmond's "Crazy Horses" to which Rob (I'm not John Travolta) Hansen did a solo performance of early '70s Cardiff disco style. Most everybody bopped around to at least a few of the numbers and all agreed it was the best Con disco in ages. Novacon, take note!!

Linda Pickersgill.

FOLLOW UP TO THE CENSORSHIP DEBATE

If you remember , in yesterday's Cactus Times we asked to hear from the fella who walked out of the debate saying "This has nothing to do with science fiction. He did indeed approach me in the fanzine room and we had a good constructive chat abouttthe previous evening. Seems that this is the first con that he and his fellow members of the Newcastle University SF group have attended with no prior contact with fandom at all. We old hacks tend to forget that words like "con", "bid" or even "fan" carry a different meaning for those who've never been around fandom before. I did my best "Here's Fandom in a Nutshell" speech and briefly explained the faanish/social side to the SF world including cons and bids. It was concluded that what he thought of as a "fan" panel was quite different from what fans think of as a fan panel; another case of simple miscommunication. I think all was peacefully resolved.

Linda Pickersgill (again)

PARTY PARTY PARTY: In case you didn't get the message there is to be a party tonight in the fanzine room put on by the Tynecon II/Mexicon committee with lots of free stuff and suprises. There will also be a fabulous fanzine auction prior to the party (about 10:30) in which rare and extreely valuable as well as a few slightly embarrasing fanzines will go to the highest bidder. Come along with your best Hollywood Mexicon accent had have a good time. EXTRA EXTRA: Mexicon Backdrop, cactus and more books are to be auctioned as well. Come along and make your bids.

By the way, has anyone seen a small dictaphone or an extreemly tacky pink Mexicon style jacket? Please return to the fanzine room.

BOOKROOM DEALERS MOAN, AUTHOR RAVES

Sales in the bookroom have been slowish, but not disastrous, and the dealers reluctantly admit that they've had a good enough time not to midn too much. "Most of us come to cons wearing two hats, anyway" said Ken Slater. "Personally, I'm very very happy, but as a businessman I'm in dire straits." But he thinks he'll break even.

What has sold best? Slater has sold out of books by Gray and Hoban; among non-fiction, Imagination on Trial has done well since people realised he'd got it, but Teaching SF hasn't sold at all. Back with fiction, Pzyche, Further Adventures of Halley's Comet, and Firebird 3 have been good sellers. Two sets of Joan Aiken's children's books have gone; does this prove that fans are just overgrown kids?

But as a dealer, he had to end with a moan: "I deliberately didn't bring any media stuff, but I have been asked for it. For instance, someone just asked for the new Star Trek book."

Rog Peyton has more discerning customers, and has had no media requests at all. How's he doing? "I'd like a refund! No, I'm doing as well as I expected, no more, no less." His best seller has been Easy Travel to Other Planets, possibly helped by a sign he displayed with it: "Recommended by Greg Pickersgill". He'd sold out of Gray and Hoban by Saturday luchtime; could have sold more, but he was understocked, despite urgent requests to the publishers. Do publishers' publicity and sales departments have any influence over their warehouse people?

He was surprised, "but very glad, to see that Voyager in the Night didn't sell at all. But can you expect C J Cherryh to sell at a literate con? Battlefield Earth was the book most commented on, but no-one has actually bought Rog's one copy.

Both dealers are enjoying the con itself. "Tremendously" said Rog. Ken added that ti was the first con for years where he'd been able to see programme items after the bookroom closed; "in fact, the other night I was on the flippin' panel!" They ended with an arcane but important request for con committees. Please, please, invoice dealers on headed paper, and mention "display space", rather than "tables". It all has to do with tax, accountants, and depreciation, and makes your reporter's head swim, but it's important to them.

Next we spotted a typical customer: a tall, bespectacled Scot in a green jersey, who'd last been seen having a very good time at the disco, but looked none the worse for it now. Was he going to buy any books? "Yes, if I find one I like." What about the books he was er specially interested in "Well, I can't see any, so I suppose they've all been sold," said Alastair Gray, looking pretty pleased about it.

Quite without prompting, he drew our attention to the fanthology, Ten for the Mexicon. "There's some pretty good writing in there." He liked Manhatten (Mullan), Best Popcorn in Town (L Pickersgill), A Kind of Immortality (Willis), and Going Underground (Ryman). Peter Nicholls's memoir of Philip K Dick also interested him, as a reader of Dick's fiction. But he didn't like Sphincters at Dawn (Kettle) one bit.

Meanwhile, Rog and Ken were counting their money under the display space, hoping our reporter didn't notice.

STOP PRESS: STOP PRESS.

If you feel you can add anything to this newsletter, see Mike Hamilton or Linda Pickersgill in the area of therfanzine room.

Special thanks to Abigail Frost for her item 'BOOKROOM DEALERS MOAN, AUTHOR RAVES. Dave Cockfield for his film piece. And anybody else who has helped.

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THE MEXICON POLL.

1. Is this your first convention?

2. What size of convention do you enjoy the most? (Give number.)

3. What item of this convention did you enjoy the most?

4. What item of this con did you like the least.

5. Is there something missing from this convention which you think would have improved it?

6. What did you think of the Hotel?

7. Would you be interested in attending another Mexicon (held elsewhere in the U.K?)

8. Suggest suitable films for a Mexicon? (Those not generally available.)

9. How many books do you own.

Any other comments?

Please fill in and post in the box in the fanzine room.